



# The National Association of Vocation & Formation Directors (NAVFD)

May 2020

## NAVFD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 2020

President's Report, Sister Mary Rowell

It has been an eventful year for NAVFD and I wish to begin this report with words of gratitude to all of you, our members. Thank you for your support of the Association and for all you are and do in fostering a climate for and a culture of vocation in Canada. We were, of course saddened that this year's Conference



planned for Newfoundland was postponed in light of the current Coronavirus pandemic. The postponement entailed much work for the local planning Committee in Newfoundland and for Sister Nancy Sullivan, CSJ, Executive Director of NAVFD. Special thanks to all of them for generously working toward a timely resolution and for looking toward planning the conference for next year. Sister Nancy will address this topic further in her Report to the AGM. Thank you all for your understanding in the present context and we look forward to being together again in Newfoundland next year. During the year we have been able to begin very effective follow-up of our vocation research project, Landscape of Religious Vocations in Canada". Thanks to Board member Brother Denis Claivaz, a well-attended and very successful focus group was held at the Mary Ward Centre in Toronto on October 9, 2019. A further focus group was held in Edmonton on November 30,

2019. I was able to travel to Edmonton for that event to present key findings of the research and to facilitate a lively discussion by participants. Many thanks to Sister Mary Clare Stack, U.J., former NAVFD Board member, who made extensive arrangements for the Edmonton focus group held at Providence Centre in Edmonton. Thanks, as well to all of those who attended the event and who provided such helpful and creative comment. An invitation has been extended by the religious communities in Edmonton for a further gathering and NAVFD presentation. This has not been possible to arrange at this point due to the pandemic but plans will be made when travel becomes possible again. Unfortunately, a focus group, beautifully planned to be held in Hamilton, Ontario, by Sister Elaine Arsenault, SSS had to be cancelled due to inclement weather. Once again, this will be rescheduled when possible. With the help of Sister Joanne O'Regan, CSM feedback from the research will be received from Atlantic Canada as soon as possible. What made the focus groups so successful in providing affirmation of the research results and ideas for future strategic planning was the diversity of the groups attending. In particular, I would like to express special thanks to the new members of religious communities who attended. They brought great energy, clarity and contemporary wisdom to the conversations.

In addition to focus groups, NAVFD was

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invited by Canadian members of UISG (International Union of General Superiors) to present the findings of the research at their meeting held at Providence Centre in Montreal. I was privileged to attend that gathering accompanied by Sister Sarah Rudolph, IBVM. Sarah, who is currently first professed in her Congregation provided invaluable comment relating to the research for the Congregational Leaders present. Much gratitude to Sarah and to the members of UISG for their gracious invitation, great interest and support.

Regarding research also, NAVFD has received an invitation from Sister Nathalie Becquart, Xav. to collaborate on a meta-analysis of vocation research data now collected in Australia, Canada, Ireland, France, and the recent study conducted in the United States. We look forward to our collaboration in this venture.

One of the aims of NAVFD is to move more fully into our mandate to help create a wide culture of vocation in Canada. On November 23, 2019, I was privileged to present on this topic and on the work of NAVFD for a large gathering of Serra Club members during their retreat held at Mount Carmel Spirituality Centre in Niagara Falls. This provided a great opportunity to work with and strengthen relationships with this group that is so supportive of vocations in Canada.

Over the new year, numerous NAVFD members were able to participate in the "Rise-Up" Conference held in Toronto involving approximately 1500 young adults. Beyond our borders, our Association's collaboration has continued with the National Religious Formation Conference (NRVC) and the Religious Formation Conference (RFC) in the United States. Between,

October 21-23, 2019 I attended, on behalf of NAVFD, the Fall Institute conducted by NRVC held in Leavenworth, Kansas where I provided presentations on "The Art of Discernment in Vocation Ministry." The NRVC Institutes provide basic and continuing formation for Vocation Directors. We are grateful for all the opportunities we have in friendship with our U.S. colleagues, as together, we strive to sustain and enliven vocation and formation initiatives in North America.

For all of the work of this year I thank our committed Board members, Denis Claivaz, Joanne O'Regan and Elaine Arsenault. I also wish to express "profound gratitude to Nancy Sullivan who, as Executive Director of NAVFD, works generously and tirelessly in the interests of the Association bringing her many gifts that "keep the wheels turning" and that present, so well, the face of NAVFD in Canada and beyond. I also wish to thank the members of the Finance Committee and the Conference Planning Committee for their faithful and generous work for NAVFD.

In ending this Report, I'm grateful for the many ways each of our members is contributing to the Association, Church and society in these unprecedented days of pandemic. Let us pray together for all of those directly affected and suffering across the world in the face of the Coronavirus. May we also pray for one another for safety and wellbeing, for our communities, families and friends in these difficult and anxious days. Together, we face an unknown future but a future that invites NAVFD to new and expanding horizons of hope and promise. Thank you all.

Respectfully submitted, Mary Rowell, CSJ (President)

Still On!!!

As we are all navigating during these unprecedented times, we are unable to participate in the retreat in Saskatoon. However, we will offer the retreat **VIRTUALLY!** Begins Monday July 27 (later afternoon/early evening) to Thursday July 30 (late day).

Cost: \$100 per person Guiding our retreat experience will be the same:

Sr. Bernadette O'Reilly, NDS and Fr. Larry Gillick SJ.

Registration is open!

Visit [aroundthewell.ca](http://aroundthewell.ca) or email directly to [Ndscgen@rogers.com](mailto:Ndscgen@rogers.com) for more information and registration details.



## WEBINARS



### *Unpacking the Youth Synod and Christus Vivit* by Sr. Nathalie Becquart

This webinar offered jointly by the Toronto Archdiocesan Vocation Directors' Association and NAVFD was very well received and there will be a report in our June newsletter. Stay tuned!

### *AGM and New Board Members*

Thanks to all the members who joined the zoom meeting for our AGM on May 11. It was good to see that high level of interest and involvement. Mary Rowell's article in this newsletter gives just some of the highlights of NAVFD over the past year which were shared at the AGM. The membership elected two new Board members who will bring fresh perspectives to the Board. All of us at NAVFD thank them for their generosity and congratulate them for assuming their new roles among their many other activities in their lives.



### **Michelle Garlinski**

A Sister of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, Michelle was born and raised in Winnipeg. Her ministry has primarily been with and to young people for 28 years. Serving in varying capacities (parish, school, regional, national and international), she is passionate about sharing the story of our faith in ordinary ways. Sr. Michelle has both experience and education in Youth Ministry, Sociology and Theology. With the collaboration and support of her community and mentors, she initiated the retreats for Religious 55 ish and Under in Canada (2017). Michelle is committed to the mission of sharing the message that everyone has a vocation to be discerned. As a newer Religious, living in uncertain times, she tries to engage her imagination in ways that lead her to live a life of joy and gratitude. Sr. Michelle is currently the Director of the Mission and Charism Office at St. Mary's Academy, Winnipeg, Manitoba and will begin studies in the MA in Transformative Leadership and Spirituality program (University of St. Paul), fall 2020.

### **JOSEPHINE BADALI, CND**

I am a Torontonion who has been a professed member of the Congregation of Notre Dame of Montreal for fifty-seven years. During those years, the Congregation has called and empowered me to serve in numerous locations and ministries across Canada. I have served as an elementary school teacher in Ontario, as catechist and as pastoral associate in parishes in British Columbia, as Catholic chaplain in 2 men's prisons also in British Columbia, and as a Province and Congregation Leader within my Congregation.

My experience in Congregation leadership, 5 years as Provincial Leader for the newly formed (at that time) English Canadian Province and 10 years as Congregation Leader, gave me the opportunity to meet the membership of my Congregation on four continents in our world. Sharing in the stories of the life and ministry of Sisters, Associates, Collaborators, Families and Friends has been the greatest gift of leadership for me. More recently, I completed a 6 month internship in spiritual accompaniment at St. Beuno's Jesuit Spirituality Centre in Wales. Presently, I am doing some chapter facilitation and some spiritual accompaniment. Having met so many people around the world and having experienced a variety of cultures helps me to recognize the global interconnectedness of simple daily events and the deep richness in "difference".

Long has it been my desire to recognize, to claim and to honour the gift of God within each person. To collaborate in others' life work of "fanning into flame the gift of God" within them and of fostering the inner freedom in which it may burn brightly is my hope. This has been the motivation behind my ministry and the impetus of my faith journey.

